

No. 40a

September 28, 2016 (Koh)

German Immunology Award for Hans-Reimer Rodewald

For his groundbreaking research, Hans-Reimer Rodewald from the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) in Heidelberg has been honored by the German Society for Immunology (DGfI) with the 2016 German Immunology Award. Rodewald's work focuses on the question of how various types of immune cells develop from stem cells and join up to form a functioning immune system. Rodewald received the € 10,000 award at the Annual Meeting of the DGfI in Hamburg.

With his outstanding scientific accomplishments, Hans-Reimer Rodewald has been among the world's leading immunologists for many years. His research is centered around the question of how various types of immune cells in the body develop from stem cells to form and maintain a functioning immune system. The origin of the many different types of immune cells ultimately determines their function. "It is difficult to highlight individual milestones from the wealth of Hans-Reimer Rodewald's pioneering achievements," said DGfI's President Jürgen Wienands.

Michael Boutros, acting Chairman and Scientific Director of the DKFZ, is pleased: "We heartily congratulate Hans-Reimer Rodewald on this outstanding distinction, which he greatly deserves. We have long been impressed by the seminal results in immunology research that have been obtained in his lab."

The discovery of a particular cellular stage from which a cell type called mast cells develops aroused particular attention in the scientific community. Mast cells are a type of immune cells that until now has remained enigmatic. They are involved in many allergic reactions. For many years, scientists had been searching in vain for the mast cell's progenitor. Another equally noteworthy achievement has been the unraveling of signaling networks that regulate the development of T lymphocytes in the thymus. This groundbreaking research has not only enhanced our understanding of how blood cells form from stem cells (hematopoiesis) but has also provided new and unexpected insights into the mechanisms underlying the development of T cell leukemias. In his most recent work, Rodewald succeeded in making the development of blood cells visible by skillfully using fluorescent dyes that can be "switched on" as needed.

It comes as no surprise that Rodewald's discoveries have already made their way into immunology textbooks. "The groundbreaking research conducted in Rodewald's lab is based on scientific cleverness and experimental-methodological excellence that is seminal for other science disciplines as well," stated Wienands. He added: "In Hans-Reimer Rodewald, we are honoring a role model for young scientists."

Hans-Reimer Rodewald studied veterinary medicine in Hannover and subsequently did his doctorate at the Max Planck Institute of Immunobiology in Freiburg. Afterwards, he worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute of Harvard Medical School. From 1992 to 1999, Rodewald was a member of the Basel Institute for Immunology. He subsequently accepted a professorship for Immunology at the University of Ulm. Since 2010, he has led the Division of Cellular Immunology at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ). Rodewald is deputy coordinator of DKFZ's Research Program "Tumor Immunology".

Rodewald has published his research results in about one hundred scientific publications so far, many of them in the most prestigious specialist journals. In 2009, he received an Advanced Grant from the European Research Council (ERC). He has been EMBO Member since 2016.

About the German Immunology Award

The German Immunology Award (Deutscher Immunologie-Preis) is the highest science award given by the German Society for Immunology (DGfI). It succeeds the Avery-Landsteiner Award and will be awarded for the first time this year. It comes with a budget of €10,000.

The award honors internationally renowned scientists who have made outstanding contributions to unraveling basic principles in immunology and/or translating basic research into clinical practice. The German Immunology Award is made possible by support from Celgene GmbH and is awarded every two years.

An image of Hans-Reimer Rodewald is available for download at:

http://www.dkfz.de/de/presse/pressemitteilungen/2016/bilder/Rodewald_Hans-Reimer.jpg

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The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 3,000 employees is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. At DKFZ, more than 1,000 scientists investigate how cancer develops, identify cancer risk factors and endeavor to find new strategies to prevent people from getting cancer. They develop novel approaches to make tumor diagnosis more precise and treatment of cancer patients more successful. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. Jointly with Heidelberg University Hospital, DKFZ has established the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg, where promising approaches from cancer research are translated into the clinic. In the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research (DKTK), one of six German Centers for Health Research, DKFZ maintains translational centers at seven university partnering sites. Combining excellent university hospitals with high-profile research at a Helmholtz Center is an important contribution to improving the chances of cancer patients. DKFZ is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers, with ninety percent of its funding coming from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

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